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Universal design theory in transformation process of street space in Warsaw

Transforming existing public space becomes one of the biggest challenges for European cities. Different activities aiming at improving quality of life of existing quarters may change hierarchy of users and relations between them. Improvement of accessibility is crucial aspect to consider in planning such changes as pedestrianization, calming-down traffic and creating attractive public space. Such realisations should be precluded by careful research on local conditions and existing problems at street level.

The aim of this paper is to present possible implementations of universal design theory in context of reshaping public space, using examples from Warsaw. Changes in street design usually focus mainly on current position of cyclists or pedestrians (considered as one homogenous group) and possible facilitations connected to idea of sustainable, intermodal public transport, such as rearrangement of car parking spaces, introduction of bicycle lanes or reconstruction of bus and tram stops, but also planting new greenery. However, contemporary changes offer opportunity to also significantly improve accessibility of public areas for persons with reduced mobility, including people with different form of disabilities. Very important aspect is inclusion of voice of users in eventual project by giving chance to evaluate plans at designing stage.

In the paper these two mentioned approaches will be investigated in order to find and describe common points of interest. That will lead to answer to the question how small architectural changes can ease mobility of people using wheelchairs or with sight impairment. Research will be based mainly on international norm ISO 21542:2011 *Building construction -- Accessibility and usability of the built environment*. Additionally, examples from author's experience from work in Warsaw Roads Authority as Accessibility Coordinator will be presented.